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Status of Day Care in Canada 1992

A Review of the Major Findings
of the National Day Care Study 1992

National Child Care Information Centre
Child Care Programs Division

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Preface

Status of Day Care in Canada 1992 is intended to present a general overview of day care services in Canada.

This publication was developed, with the co-operation of provincial authorities, by the National Child Care Information Centre, Child Care Programs Division, Health and Welfare Canada, prior to November 4, 1993. Under government restructuring, these programs became part of the Department of Human Resources Development.

If you have any comments on *Status of Day Care in Canada 1992*, please contact the National Child Care Information Centre, Department of Human Resources Development, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1B5, (613) 954-8258.

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Major Findings

Increase in Day Care Spaces

Since 1971, the first year Health and Welfare Canada gathered data on national day care, there has been significant growth in the number of day care spaces. In 1971 there were 17,391 spaces. In 1992 there were 350 680 spaces. This represents a twenty-fold increase.

Each subsequent year since 1971 has shown a rate of growth between 10% and 16%, with only a few exceptions until 1990 when the rate dropped to 7.56%. This downward trend continued in 1991 to 3.89%, the lowest rate of growth since 1978. The rate of growth in 1992, although still low, climbed to 5.28%.

The number of full-time day care spaces in Canada in 1992 was 350 680. This is an increase of 17 598.

Centre care spaces increased by 10 452.

Family day care spaces increased by 7 146.

Table 1 indicates the growth of centre and family day care spaces by year.

The overall rate of growth in 1992 was 5.28% compared to 3.89% in 1991.

The rate of growth for family day care over 1991 was 17.54%.

The rate of growth for centre day care over 1991 was 3.58%.

Age Groups Served by Day Care Programs

As indicated in Table 2, the availability of day care services differs according to the age of the child.

As in the past, day care centre spaces are primarily being used by children between the ages of three and six years. The spaces available to this age group account for 173 809 or 57.4% of the total day care centre spaces.

Only 49 453 or 16.3% of centre spaces are filled by children under the age of three. This contrasts with the Family Day Care program where there are 18 099 spaces (37.79%) serving children under three.

School-age day care spaces account for 86 985, and constitutes 24.80% of the day care spaces.

Sponsorship of Day Care Centres

In 1968, 75% of all day care spaces were under commercial auspices. The percentage of commercial spaces dropped over the years but for the past few years has been fairly stable – between 38% and 43%. In 1992, the commercial sector constitutes 31.11% of the total centre spaces. The non-profit sector constitutes 68.89% of the total centre spaces.

The number of non-profit day care centre spaces increased by 11 316.

Tables 3 and 4 show the distribution and relative growth of day care spaces under different types of sponsorship.

Day Care Spaces by Province and Territory

Table 5 shows full-time centre spaces and family day care spaces by province and territory. Table 6 provides comparison by auspice.

Full-time Day Care Spaces in Canada in Relation to the Number of Day Care Age Children of Parents in the Labour Market

The mandate for *Status of Day Care in Canada* has been to show the year-by-year growth patterns in day care.

However, there has always been some interest in relating these findings to the degree of unmet need. The data provided by the provinces does not lend itself directly to this type of analysis. To address this question, the early Status of Day Care in Canada reports compared the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children of mothers who were in the labour force. The problem with this approach is that many mothers work part-time and do not require a full-time day care space. This creates an exaggerated impression of the degree of unmet need.

On the other hand, if only the data on children of two parents who work full-time are considered, actual need may be under-estimated, in that a parent working 20 hours a week would not likely find a part-time day care space to match the hours needed for care.

Consequently, Status of Day Care in Canada now uses a format which presents four separate compilations estimating the percentage of children who can be served by existing day care spaces. The four separate compilations are for children 0-17 months; children between 18 months and 35 months; children age 3 to 5 inclusive and children between 6 and 12 years.

This approach compares only the number of full-time day care spaces to the number of children by various ages where the parents are involved in one of the four categories. It should not be construed to relate to the number of children whose parents would choose a formalized day care setting if it were made available.

Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10 relate the four categories and parental work situations to the percentage of full-time day care spaces available.

The existing evidence of parental preference is sketchy at best, but it does seem to suggest that about 50% of those not using formalized care would do so if provided the opportunity. However, a number of variables need to be researched before definitive statements can be made.

Another consideration is the impact of full-time kindergarten and part-time junior kindergarten in the school system on the demand for day care.

Table 2 shows that the percentage of spaces available for five-year-olds and, to a lesser extent, for four-year-olds is significantly lower than for three-year-olds. Some provinces and territories have difficulty reporting the actual number of children in their centres by age and some of the figures in this table are best estimates. The age breakdown is much less reliable than are the data on the number of spaces available by auspice.

Table 1 – Distribution of Centre Spaces, Family Day Care Spaces and Day Care Centres by Year

Number of Spaces	March 31	March 31	March 31	March 31	March 31	Increase over 1991	
	1971	1985	1990	1991	1992	No.	%
Centre Spaces	16 791	169 751	282 465	292 338	302 790	10 452	3.58
Family Day Care Spaces	600	22 623	38 159	40 744	47 890	6 746	16.56
Total Spaces	17 391	192 374	320 624	333 082	350 680	17 598	5.28
Day Care Centres	682	4 685	7 712	7 283	8 355	1 072	14.72*

* The number of centres reported in 1991 was lower than in 1990 and higher again in 1992. It is likely that an error in reporting took place in 1991.

Table 2 – Spaces in Day Care Centres and Family Day Care Homes by Age of Children Served (1992)

Ages*	Day Care Centres		Family Day Care Homes	
	No.	%	No.	%
0-17 mos.	23 613	7.80	8 999	18.79
18-35 mos.	25 840	8.53	9 100	19.00
3 years	89 148	29.44	7 317	15.28
4 years	45 559	15.04	7 992	16.69
5 years	39 102	12.91	7 025	14.67
6-10 years	76 913	25.41	6 854	14.31
10-12 years	2 615	0.86	603	1.26
Total	302 790	99.9	47 890	100.00

*Some provinces/territories are not able to provide breakdowns by age and in such cases, estimates have been provided.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding

Table 3 – Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1979, 1985 and 1992

Type of Sponsorship	1979		1985		1992	
	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces	Spaces	% of Spaces
Non-Profit	42 534	50.59	106 131	62.52	208 509	68.89
Commercial	41 549	49.41	63 631	37.48	94 281	31.11
Total	84 083	100.00	169 762	100.00	302 790	100.00

Table 4 – Sponsorship of Centre Spaces 1991 and 1992

Type of Sponsorship	1991	1992	Increase	
	Spaces	Spaces	No.	%
Non-Profit	197 193	208 509	11 316	5.74
Commercial	95 145	94 281	(864)	-.9
Total	292 338	302 854	10 516	3.60

Table 5 – Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Spaces

Provinces	Centre Spaces	Family Day Care Spaces	Centres
Newfoundland	2 764	-	89
Prince Edward Island	2 482	60	52
Nova Scotia	10 885	145	181
New Brunswick	6 444	78	179
Quebec	77 269	8 203	2 146
Ontario	118 329	15 078*	3 000
Manitoba	11 492	3 328	302
Saskatchewan	4 135	2 283	110
Alberta	45 252	7 893	1 103
British Columbia	22 105	10 590	1 143
Northwest Territories	883	80	25
Yukon	750	152	25
National Totals	302 790	47 890	8 355

***Based on estimate**
Total Spaces: 350 680

Table 6 – Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Centre Spaces by Auspice

Provinces/Territories	Non-Profit	Commercial	Total
Newfoundland	880	1 884	2 764
Prince Edward Island	1 499	983	2 482
Nova Scotia	6 539	4 346	10 885
New Brunswick	3 122	3 322	6 444
Quebec	65 980	11 289	77 269
Ontario	87 685	30 644	118 329
Manitoba	10 303	1 189	11 492
Saskatchewan	3 930	205	4 135
Alberta	13 853	31 399	45 252
British Columbia	13 331	8 774	22 105
Northwest Territories	808	75	883
Yukon	579	171	750
National Totals	208 509	94 281	302 790

Table 7 – Infant Day Care – Children 0-17 Months

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	347 031	9.4
Full-time working parents ⁽¹⁾	176 317	18.5
Full-time working parents ⁽²⁾ plus students	188 193	17.33
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week ⁽³⁾	233 989	13.94

As of March 1992, there were 32 612 full-time day care spaces for children 0-17 months of age. As can be seen from the above four compilations, the percentage of children these spaces can serve differs according to which groups of parents are included in the compilation.

Table 8 – Children between the Ages of 18-36 Months (inclusive)

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	350 645	9.96
Full-time working parents ⁽¹⁾	164 786	21.20
Full-time working parents ⁽²⁾ plus students	180 771	19.33
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week ⁽³⁾	233 401	14.97

As of March 1992, there were 34 940 full-time day care spaces for children between the ages of 18 months and 36 months.

Table 9 – Children between the Ages of 3 and 6 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	694 648	28.4
Full-time working parents ⁽¹⁾	331 322	59.20
Full-time working parents ⁽²⁾ plus students	363 547	53.95
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week ⁽³⁾	468 502	41.87

As of March 1992, there were 196 143 day care spaces for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

Table 10 – Children between the Ages of 6 and 10 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	988 589	8.47
Full-time working parents ⁽¹⁾	511 157	16.39
Full-time working parents ⁽²⁾ plus students	547 464	15.3
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week ⁽³⁾	582 326	12.28

As of March 1992, there were 83 767 day care spaces for children between the ages of 6 and 10 years.

Table 11 – Children between the Ages of 6 and 13 Years

Category of Parent	Number of Children	% of Children Served
Mothers in labour force	1 767 178	4.94
Full-time working parents ⁽¹⁾	952 787	9.13
Full-time working parents ⁽²⁾ plus students	1 016 808	8.55
Full-time working parents plus students, plus parents working 20 to 29 hours a week ⁽³⁾	1 251 638	6.95

As of March 1992, there were 86 985 day care spaces for school-age children.

Notes

1. This category includes lone parents working full time, and includes two-parent families in which both parents work full time.
2. This category includes full-time working parents, lone parents who are full-time students, two-parent families in which one parent works full time and the other is a full-time student, and two-parent families in which both parents are full-time students.
3. This category includes full-time working parents, student-parents, lone parents who work 20 to 29 hours a week, two-parent families in which both parents work 20 to 29 hours a week, and two-parent families in which one parent works 20 to 29 hours a week and the other is a full-time student.

Glossary

Auspice – Sponsorship and/or the responsibility for the day care program, i.e. non-profit community board or commercial operator.

Centre care – Care given to groups of children in a licensed day care centre.

Commercial centre – A licensed day care centre that is set up as a proprietary operation. The term describes larger franchise operations, as well as the small, individually owned centres.

Community board centre – A licensed day care centre that is established as a non-profit organization and is governed by a community board of directors.

Day care facility – For the purposes of this report, a licensed or provincially approved centre or private home providing care for children outside of their own home for eight to ten hours a day.

Family day care – A program involving the selection and supervision by a government or authorized private agency of private families who give care to children during the day.

Infant day care – Care provided by a day care centre or a family day care home for children under the age of two.

Latch-key child – School-age child of working parents who carries house keys to gain entrance to home after school and before parents return from work.

Non-profit day care – For the purposes of this report, includes both community board centres and co-operative day care programs.

Preschool day care – Care provided by a day care centre or a family day care home for children aged two to six.

Private or casual day care arrangements – Arrangements between the parent and the provider, such as those involving a private baby-sitter, which are not under the supervision of a licensing authority or day care agency.

Public day care – A licensed day care centre owned and operated by a municipal or provincial government.

School-age day care – Supervision of young school-age children before school begins, during the noon hour, after class, and on days when school is not in session.